
Dear Student Affiliates of Division Seventeen (SAS),

I have been invited to send you a message addressing any number of issues and questions. I’ve opted to focus on why I love the identity of being a counseling psychologist, which has led to my continued involvement with and support of the Society of Counseling Psychology, Division 17. The following is partly drawn from my chapter, “The Diverse and Intriguing Career Opportunities for Counseling Psychologists,” in R. J. Sternberg’s (Ed.) (2006) Career Paths in Psychology.

The Distinction of Counseling Psychology

Historically, the professional practice of counseling psychology has been characterized as providing personal counseling as well as career and educational specialization (Brown & Lent, 2000; Norcross, 2000). It is one of the few disciplines (with community psychology) that continued to focus on the values of fostering strength and well-being (Walsh, 1999). A focus on human development across the life span in research has led to the development of interventions that are preventive and developmental as well as remedial.

Counseling psychology is unique in its historical focus on preventive and developmental interventions. Preventive interventions are those that help people recognize and deal with issues before they become problematic. Developmental interventions are educative in nature, and are designed to help people understand issues, factors, and (Continued on page 3)

L E T T E R  F R O M  T H E  E D I T O R S

We are delighted to submit the second newsletter for the year! Thank you to all who have expressed support as we transitioned from our former SAS institution, the University of North Dakota, to the University at Albany. Thanks, too, to those who have contributed.

Here, we would like to give you more of what to expect in coming issues. Beginning this coming academic year we will be sending you three newsletters. These will be...
LETTER FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

At the end of the second semester of our first year as host institution for SAS, our Executive Board remains very excited about all of the progress we have made toward implementing our many goals. Specifically, we are very excited to be showcasing our second Newsletter and providing a forum for members to learn about some of our accomplishments.

As you read the Committee reports that follow, you will learn about our success in filling many formerly empty network representative and program representative positions, proposing and gaining approval for programming at the APA convention, and creating outreach programs to educate undergraduate students about counseling psychology and applying to graduate school.

Despite these successes, we feel that many accomplishments lie ahead of us, particularly when it comes to communicating with our members. At this time, there are numerous counseling psychology doctoral programs that do not currently have a SAS representative. We are concerned about this fact because representation and communication are perhaps the most integral components of our organization. SAS exists to serve as a liaison between professional members of the Society of Counseling Psychology, Division 17 of APA and you, our student colleagues. As such, we are determined to implement a more effective means of communication so that we may share information from the leaders of SCP with our members, while simultaneously conveying student feedback and concerns to our professional colleagues.

We are particularly interested in effectively representing student voices at professional meetings and conferences. Recently, the SAS Co-Chairs were privileged to attend the SCP mid-winter meeting in Seattle, WA, as well as the midwinter meeting of the Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs in Albuquerque, NM. We were inspired by the academic knowledge, clinical expertise, the thoughtful interactions, and collegial attitudes of our professional colleagues. Furthermore, we were humbled and enthused by the sheer dedication displayed by myriad SCP professionals toward educating and mentoring graduate students.

Moving forward, we hope that facilitating communication between our Executive Board and representatives will allow us to create a more effective conduit for sharing information between our professional leaders, our Board, and our student members. As part of this endeavor, our network coordinators have begun reaching out to our regional and program representatives in order to stimulate conversations between our members, the representatives, and our Executive Board.

Through our discussions with students from programs throughout the country, we are continually amazed by the perspectives and accomplishments of our peers. We would like for SAS to be a place where counseling psychology students may come together to share their experiences and get to know each other. We are invested in learning your opinions on a number of issues including how you may feel affected by the ongoing imbalance between the number of available internships and the number of qualified internship applicants; the ways in which you as students, or your program in general, advance social justice; and your opinions on potentially allowing pre-graduation practicum hours to count toward licensure, to name a few. Most importantly, we want to know how we may best represent your concerns. If your program has a SAS representative, please reach out to her or him and share your perspective about how SAS can better represent your interests. If your program does not have a representative, and you are interested in becoming one, please let us know! We look forward to hearing from you.

Christopher Connacher
& Melanie Lantz

“SAS exists to serve as a liaison between professional members of the Society of Counseling Psychology... and you.”
or skills involved in normal human development. Remedial interventions are those designed to remedy problem areas, and usually, but not always, involve psychotherapeutic services.

What that means is that counseling psychologists study the normal, predictable life cycle, including predictable life changes and transitions, of individuals within a culture, and identify issues and experiences that add to or detract from one’s sense of well-being in that process. We then develop interventions in order to help facilitate optimal development. Counseling psychologists see themselves as educators, emphasize the empowerment of individuals, value preventive as well as remedial intervention efforts, and work toward the increased quality of life for all people. We bring a unique “set of lenses” for viewing and understanding human behavior and on factors we believe necessary for psychologically healthy functioning.

The growing societal awareness and attention to the effects of lifestyle and behavior on health and illness is creating important roles for psychologists in prevention, health promotion and disease management. Counseling psychologists have the skills, training and perspective to provide services, whether it be psychotherapy, consultation, or training, to solve behavioral problems with individuals, groups, organizations, systems or even the population at large. Learning how to apply those abilities and knowledge in new settings is a lifelong strategy for success.

**Influence of Counseling Psychology on the Field and APA**

Inherent in the philosophy of counseling psychology is a non-pathological focus on normalcy and day-to-day problems in living, with emphasis on strengths and adaptive strategies and resilience in our clients (Fassinger & Schlossberg, 1992; Heppner, et al 2000). A major theme in counseling psychology for the last three decades has been an awareness of viewing people and their behavior within a sociocultural context influenced by such variables as culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, etc. (Heppner, et al, 2000). Because counseling psychologists view these environmental and societal factors as important in human development (in addition to individual or familial factors), they tend to be leaders in the profession in attending to research, training, curriculum development, and interventions with human diversity (Brown & Lent, 2000; Vasquez, 2003).

Counseling psychology was thus a leader in prioritizing social justice as a major value in counseling psychology, as well as in the American Psychological Association. The Society of Counseling Psychology has intentionally and successfully become active in the past decade in ensuring that its members hold office in various leadership positions in the American Psychological Association. Being “at the table” results in the ability to influence colleagues in regard to policy decision making on Boards and Committees, Council of Representatives, Board of Directors, as well as in other Divisions and at our respective State, Provincial, Territorial Associations.

I clearly love the field of counseling psychology, and believe that most people interested in human behavior would find it to be interesting, stimulating, and very rewarding. The perspectives, attitudes, skills and knowledge that counseling psychologists develop as a result of their training contribute to making them very marketable in a number of different career paths.

A commitment to lifelong learning may lead to the development of a variety of specialties and niches throughout your career. Nevertheless, the fundamental values of counseling psychology will remain as part of your foundation. The role of counseling psychologist elicits respect, prestige and power to some degree. It is reasonably financially rewarding.

I hope that you stay involved in SAS and in APAGS, and then continue your involvement in both the Division and in APA once you obtain your degree.

My best wishes to each and every one of you.

Melba Vasquez, PhD, ABPP
APA President, 2011
(Continued from page 1)

based broadly on the current pillars that guide our SAS initiatives: (1) Diversity, (2) Scholarship, (3) Social Justice and Advocacy, and (4) Professional Development. Avoiding the problem of marginalizing diversity and social justice, our hope is to infuse every issue with these elements. However, major sections of the Newsletter will reflect Diversity and Social Justice in the Fall issue, Scholarship in the Spring issue, and Professional Development in the summer.

We want you to contribute. Despite the differences in training programs, students in counseling psychology share a tremendous amount of interests, developmental processes and growth edges, and professional growth. We want you to share your successes, your experiences, and your passions with the student affiliate community as a whole. With all there is to accomplish, training can be an isolating process. Connecting with like-minded individuals in pursuit of best practices in our field can be incredibly motivating. To that end, we prefer to publish student contributions before the submissions of those who already in the field.

Perhaps more than peer support, the main objective of SAS is to connect our students with Division 17, keeping you informed of trends, assisting in preparing them to be early career professionals with continued membership in Division 17, and providing a dialogue between students and leaders in our field. With this in mind, each fall there will be an interview with the incoming Division 17 President. We will be inviting input from internship training directors, and we will be promoting professional events where students can present, meet those leaders, and form professional relationships in general.

Recognizing that much of what we do is serious in nature, we are hoping to break up some of the serious tone with more light-hearted and smaller pieces. Often, as we stretch ourselves and discover our weaknesses, a great coping strategy is to laugh at ourselves. We invite you to also contribute your funny stories and blurbs, multicultural mishaps, supervision faux pas, and dissertation disasters. Apparently we get through these things and knowing that others stumble can make stumbling less serious.

We hope to continue to provide membership surveys (see page 11 for the results of the last one), a counselor care corner (as was wisely done by our predecessors), and other small pieces of respite. We are more than happy to publish pictures of you receiving awards or spending time with fellow SAS members from across the country.

It is a great honor to be serving as your Newsletter co-chairs and we hope to speak with as many of you as possible in the coming semesters. Here are some additional rough guidelines for submission. Submissions can be sent to any of us at: sasnewslettereditor@gmail.com

Major contribution: ~1000 words
Minor contribution: ~500 words
Blurbs: ~150 words

Sincerely,
Your newsletter co-editors.

“We want you to contribute”

Coming in the Fall:

◆ Interview with Barry Chung, PhD.
◆ Interview with Training Directors.
◆ Experience with courses in diversity and social justice

PS. Look for the new SAS logo in our next issue!
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SUPERVISION
AN INTERVIEW WITH TWO EXPERT SUPERVISORS

Carlton E. Green
Boston College

In the supervisory alliance between mental health professionals and trainees, supervisors are responsible for (a) developing supervisees' competencies for providing professional services to clients, (b) monitoring trainees' professional functioning, and (c) evaluating trainees' readiness for entering the profession. Because trainees most frequently interact with supervisors in practicum-related settings, students often assume that the guidance and support received from supervisors may be limited to counseling work. However, supervision can also be efficacious for enhancing trainees' professional development in areas other than psychotherapy.

As the student representative to the Division 17 Supervision and Training Section (STS), I thought it would be useful for training and supervision experts to explicitly address how supervision might be used as a means for facilitating trainees' professional development. I interviewed two scientist-practitioners who are actively involved in supervising trainees and writing scholarly articles regarding supervision. Dr. Mike Ellis is a professor and the division director of counseling psychology at the University at Albany, State University of New York, where he oversees doctoral practicum training. For his commitment to training, as well as his numerous scholarly contributions, Dr. Ellis received the STS 2010 Distinguished Professional Achievement Award. With more than 20 years of experience as a director of training, Dr. Carol Falender supervised and taught students at multiple universities and training sites. She is the author of numerous supervision-focused publications and she currently holds teaching positions at both the University of California-Los Angeles and Pepperdine University.

For the purposes of interview, I asked the experts to think of professional development in terms of those interactions and activities that promote trainees' personal growth and career advancement. Examples might include mentoring, consulting, and collaboration that lead to trainees' development in areas other than counseling practice, such as teaching, research, and consultation. I asked them to (a) reflect on supervision experiences which had contributed to their professional development, (b) discuss how they include professional development conversations in supervision, (c) comment on the unique challenges that students from underrepresented populations may experience, and (d) provide advice for trainees who believe that their professional development needs may be going unaddressed.

Although Ellis and Falender were both supervised by psychologists throughout training, they indicated that some of...
their most impactful relationships were with social workers and psychiatrists. Ellis suggested that cross-disciplinary supervision relationships facilitate trainees’ knowledge of the differences and similarities in each fields’ professional standards and practices. This knowledge can be useful when trainees work in interdisciplinary settings, write reports for professionals who may not be counseling psychologists, and advocate for clients in managed care systems.

Reflecting upon years of receiving and providing supervision, both scholars described professional development knowledge, skills, and behaviors that could be explored through supervision. For example, supervisees should consult with supervisors regarding how to organize a private practice, market professional skills, and carve out a professional niche. Additionally, supervision should attend to supervisees’ written and verbal communication competencies, as well as their ability to apply psychological theories to non-therapy work, including teaching and consultation. For example, even though students may be graduate-level trainees, they may lack the writing competencies (e.g., proficiency with grammar, punctuation, professional language, and developing sound rationales) necessary for communicating as professional psychologists. Trainees who perceive such deficiencies might consider broaching this need with their supervisors. Additionally, Ellis recommended that supervisors monitor trainees’ written skills and make appropriate recommendations, such as encouraging trainees to utilize the writing resources at their institutions, when necessary.

In the area of professional behavior, supervisees can learn from their supervisors about maximizing membership in professional organizations, interacting with professionals from other helping fields, and presenting themselves in terms of contextually-appropriate professional dress and demeanor. Whereas, Ellis and Falender referenced a small sample of professional development issues, Falender adamantly suggested that trainees (and supervisors) become knowledgeable of Fouad et al.’s (2009) recently published competency benchmarks and related behavioral indicators. These guidelines provide a more comprehensive outline of professional development issues related to students’ readiness across all levels of training.

Raising professional issues in supervision can be challenging for supervisees and supervisors. Both scholars commented about dynamics that can pose problems for supervisors’ ability to attend to the professional development needs of racial and ethnic minorities, international students, sexual minorities, as well as students who may be economically disadvantaged. Though each scholar recommended individual student assessments, they addressed potential generalities regarding underrepresented populations.

The following examples describe some of the potential challenges: (1) some supervisors’ limited knowledge of sexual minority issues may lead to discomfort with transgender students and inhibit supervisors’ interaction with these students; (2) fear of being labeled as sexist or sexually inappropriate may prevent supervisors from addressing professional attire issues with women trainees; (3) to facilitate students’ knowledge and skills, supervisors may encourage students to purchase expensive texts without regard for students’ social class standing; (4) seeking to return to their home countries as professional psycholo-

Not a member of SAS? Here’s how to join!
If you are not an APA Member, go to:

If you are an APA member, but need to renew, go to:
http://memforms.apa.org/apa/cli/

Don’t forget the listserv! To join, simply send the following command in the body of an email to westil3@uky.edu: “subscribe div17sas your first name last name”
gists, international students may need assistance with developing a bicultural professional identity that includes both their collectivistic cultural worldview and the Western values and perspectives that are inherent to U.S. American graduate school training. Supervisors may not perceive the need for enhancing the bicultural identities of international or racial and ethnic minority students.

Although some trainees will recognize these developmental issues, some of the topics and concerns may be outside of trainees' awareness because of their perceived competence, individual differences, or lack of exposure. Based upon the power inherent to their positions, supervisors should be accountable for and address these types of issues with supervisees. Falender suggested that supervisors be sensitive yet direct when addressing these issues.

Trainees should not feel powerless if they believe that professionalism is not addressed in supervision. Both Ellis and Falender indicated that students frequently have more power than they realize. Falender recommended that, if trainees perceive the need to focus on professional development issues during supervision, they should negotiate that objective with their supervisors, who generally support trainees' self-identified training goals. Importantly, Ellis suggested that students utilize a Trainee Bill of Rights as a means of structuring conversations about their needs in supervision. However, when students perceive that supervision is not responsive to their professional development needs, they should pursue their needs assertively, but respectfully, according to Ellis. Supervisees could practice articulating their needs with a trusted, politically astute colleague, given that the conversation could be difficult. When possible, supervisees should characterize their developmental needs as relative to clients' well-being, because, per Falender, supervisors may be more motivated and responsive when client outcomes are the focus. Supervisees should work with supervisors to outline a plan for having students' training needs met. If the trainee is still not satisfied, then students might pursue support from another level of administrative support at the training site or from their academic program training directors. Whatever the case, Ellis urged that students advocate for themselves and resist being subjected to inadequate supervision.

Both interviewees’ early supervision relationships remained influential even after the formal training relationships ended. After completing his training, Ellis indicated that his former supervisor mentored him with regard to the politics of Division 17 and provided direction for developing professional presentations and writing scholarly manuscripts. Falender credits one of her supervisors with fostering her interest in supervision and for her commitment to being involved in professional organizations, the latter of which she always emphasizes with current trainees. Their experiences suggest that supervisory relationships are not limited to the training years, and trainees' professional identities may be best served by cultivating supervisory alliances even after the official supervision alliance has ended. A strong supervisory working alliance, then, not only serves to address the above-listed clinical training needs, but can also aid in professional development long after supervision has terminated.
SHORTCUTS, OYSTERS, AND PEARLS:
REFLECTIONS ON THE 2011 NATIONAL MULTICULTURAL CONFERENCE

Kathleen Niegocki, M.A.
Ball State University, Muncie, IN

Friday afternoon, in the afterglow of the 2011 National Multicultural Conference and Summit held in Seattle, my friends were geared up to visit the Space Needle. I was skeptical about this journey. It was too overcast. How would we be able to see anything from up there? I wanted to take a shortcut and move on to our next activity, which hopefully involved eating oysters.

It’s easy to take shortcuts. After all, they help us to get places faster. As a first-year doctoral student, I hear about shortcuts all the time: Just make your dissertation a continuation of your thesis. Don’t take elective courses unless they satisfy a requirement. Just teach from the Power Point slides of the last instructor. Don’t do a qualitative dissertation – you’ll be here forever and it won’t get published – ever! For some reason, these apparent pearls of wisdom don’t appeal to me – but shouldn’t I just accept the pearls graciously and take the shortcuts designed to make my life easier?

Having returned from the NMCS, I now understand my discomfort with the shortcut pearls of wisdom. I left Seattle with new pearls of wisdom that just don’t mesh with the shortcut pearls. Allow me to share some of them:

When I watched Killing Us Softly 4 by Jean Kilbourne and heard Thema Bryant-Davis’s comments following the viewing, it clicked for me that if so many mental health issues are public health problems, it would be a mistake for me to not learn how to intervene at the macro level, to do prevention work, or to promote systemic change.

Stepping out of a workshop on exploring privilege, I realized that I would be doing a disservice to my undergraduate students if I simply taught their Human Relationship Development course without intentionally re-situating the content of their textbook within its broader contexts, including that of privilege and oppression.

Listening to Ana Mari Cauce discuss the importance of epistemological pluralism, I realized that if I was going to broaden my methodological horizons, a sampler platter of statistics classes wasn’t going to cut it. All residual guilt for taking a qualitative methods class despite it not satisfying a requirement was now gone. I also decided that I would take that Program Development and Evaluation course regardless of whether or not I could con someone into counting it towards my cognate.

Listening to Martha Banks discuss beneficence and Esteban Cardemil pose questions about why researchers are not required to report how their results were used to benefit the people they studied, I realized that I want to do more than just “do no harm” when conducting research: I want my research to actually benefit people. During the final plenary session, I marveled at the possibility of conducting research within and with a community, allowing the members’ voices to guide my research questions and appreciating members’ strengths rather than taking what Larke Huang referred to as a “deficit approach.” I began to think that, by doing this kind of research, I could bridge the gap between science and practice, be an advocate, practice actual beneficence, and embody the values of the field of counseling psychology.

(Continued on page 9)
So why don’t the NMCS pearls mesh with the shortcut pearls? The NMCS crystallized a number of personal goals that I may not achieve if I glide through my training (and career) by way of shortcuts. I want to become a skilled scientist, practitioner, and advocate. I want to learn multiple epistemological paradigms and their methodologies. I want to become an effective agent of change beyond the confines of the therapy room. I want to conduct research not because it’s quick or publishable but because it is relevant, needed, and grounded in the lives and contexts of people whose role in the research process extends beyond surveymonkey.com. I am learning that to achieve these goals, I will need to be proactive, to take risks, and to seek opportunities beyond what is traditionally required in many doctoral programs. I’ll have to say “no thanks” to some of those shortcuts.

I’m sure you’re wondering how the Space Needle dilemma turned out. Despite my preference for the shortcut route, we went. Drizzle, clouds, and all, we made the trek. And once we reached the top, it was like the world had been waiting for us. Glimmering streetlights, distant mountains - we could see it all! The world was our oyster. Our delicious, briny, West Coast oyster.

For more about qualitative research in graduate school, check out our article about qualitative dissertations on page 12!

The mission of the National Multicultural Conference and Summit (NMCS) is to convene students, scientists, practitioners, and educators in psychology and related fields to inform and inspire multicultural theory, research, and practice. The NMCS is held biennially and was first held in 1999. The theme of this year’s conference was “Unification through Diversity: Bridging Psychological Science and Practice in the Public Interest.” The conference was hosted by Divisions 17, 35, 44, and 45 of the American Psychological Association.

Kathleen Niegocki, Desiree Howell, and David Adams at the National Multicultural Conference
**LETTER FROM THE PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE**

As the Fall semester begins, we would like to recap some of the programs we hosted at this year’s APA Convention in Washington D.C.. We would also like to promote the Fall conference we are co-hosting at the University at Albany, SUNY this November. We are hoping Student Affiliates of Division Seventeen’s involvement with the Diversity Conference will encourage SAS members to participate in the conference and explore the privileges associated with their various cultural identities.

First at APA, we were proud to host a conversation hour with incoming Division 17 President Dr. Barry Chung and past President Dr. Linda Forrest. The topic of the hour was Dr. Chung’s Presidential Initiative entitled “The Future of Counseling Psychology Campaign”, which will focus on a public education campaign about counseling psychology, leadership development in SCP, and global perspectives of the future of counseling psychology. Dr. Chung and Dr. Forrest engaged with students to examine perspectives of the future of counseling psychology and discussed how students can participate in Dr. Chung’s Special Initiative called the Leadership Academy. For more information about the Leadership Academy, visit [http://div17.org/scpleadershipacademy/](http://div17.org/scpleadershipacademy/).

Second, we also co-hosted a conversation hour with Dr. Rebecca Toporek at the APA convention. Dr. Toporek was the chair of Dr. Tania Israel’s Special Task Group, which focused on Exploring Privilege. We spent the hour talking with students and educators about how to promote the exploration of our privileges during graduate school training. We were encouraged by the turn out at both conversation hours at APA this year.

Currently, the Programming Committee has been dedicating much of its time to the University at Albany’s Diversity Conference in Albany, NY. This year’s student planned conference, which will take place on Friday, November 4th and Saturday, November 5th, is entitled “Exploring Privilege: Understanding and Using Our Voices”. The two-day conference will utilize experiential exercises, discussion panels, workshops, films, speakers, and student posters and roundtables to explore our privilege as counseling psychologists in training, and examine how we can use our privilege to empower others. Keep an eye out for updates on this exciting conference and how you can present a poster at the conference. And remember to “like” SAS and the Diversity Conference on Facebook.

**We hope to see you at the Diversity Conference in Albany, NY November 4 & 5!**

**Bobby Carnicella & Michelle Murray**

**Programming Committee**
LETTER FROM THE SAS MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

We want to know how we can make SAS even better for you!

In the 2010 Fall Newsletter, the Membership and Network Committee of SAS prepared a survey to find out who our members are and what our members are interested in. A big thank you to everyone who took the time out of their busy schedule to participate!

The results show that the overwhelming majority of the members who responded are in the second year of their Ph.D. programs, and a significant number of members are currently in their third or fourth year. In other words, SAS membership appears to be in various stages of professional development and may have diverse desires and needs.

One way these differences may emerge is in the level of involvement that members would like to take in SAS, although most (41%) respondents indicated they would prefer having moderate involvement in SAS!

We are thrilled that so many folks seem to want more involvement in SAS. We can help our members feel more involved is to communicate more opportunities for professional development to you, both within SAS and Division 17, but also beyond APA-affiliated events. One way for us to do this is to rely on our wonderful network of SAS Representatives nation-wide to bring us monthly updates on opportunities in their surrounding areas! In this sense, counseling psychology programs in the nation will all be connected to one another. To see if your program has a Representative, please visit: http://div17.org/SAS/network.html.

The survey results also show that many SAS members found specific SAS benefits like TCP and the listserv useful. Unfortunately, it is clear that other benefits of SAS have not been communicated to our

(Continued on page 14)
CONDUCTING A QUALITATIVE DISSERTATION

Mark Mason and Katy Dorsheimer
University at Albany, SUNY

Have you toyed with the idea of a qualitative dissertation? Perhaps you’ve even developed an idea for a qualitative study, but you are unsure about following through? Qualitative dissertations in counseling psychology doctoral programs are gradually becoming more popular, yet most students do not take advantage of this option (Ponterotto, 2005). Despite growing popularity and interest in qualitative inquiry, qualitative dissertations can appear daunting and overwhelming. A variety of explanations may contribute to this perception, including the lack of available training in qualitative study (Poulin, 2007), a dizzying array of methodologies, approaches, and conceptual foundations (Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark, & Morales, 2007; Morrow, 2007), different philosophical, epistemological, and ontological assumptions about the nature of science, knowledge and knowing, and scientific inquiry (Creswell, 2007; Haverkamp & Young, 2007; Ponterotto, 2005; Wang, 2008), and different criteria used for designing and evaluating qualitative studies (Elliott, Fischer, & Rennie, 1999; Golafshani, 2003; Stiles, 1993), such as “credibility” and “trustworthiness” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Williams & Morrow, 2009). This brief introduction to qualitative research outlines some of the benefits of conducting a qualitative dissertation as well as some common concerns that arise. The article concludes with recommendations for students interested in conducting qualitative investigations.

With a growing awareness of the value in multimethod approaches to science, there has been a call for increased diversity in methodology in counseling psychology (Polkinghorne, 1984; Haverkamp, Morrow, & Ponterotto, 2005). Based on the philosophical foundations of constructivism, phenomenology, hermeneutics, and critical and postmodern traditions, qualitative research examines the “experiential life of people” (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 138). As such, qualitative research represents a unique contribution to scientific inquiry, often by answering different research questions than quantitative research (Elliot, Fischer, & Rennie, 1999). Qualitative research seeks to address questions of “How?” and “What?,” instead of just “Why?” (Creswell, 2007). Moreover, qualitative studies richly explore participants’ meanings and experiences and seek to contextualize the findings within the participant’s world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Morrow, 2007; Wang, 2008). Such purposes of qualitative research may strengthen clinical practice (Silverstein, Auerbach, & Levant, 2006) and promote multiculturalism and social justice (Ponterotto, 2011).

Based on interpretative and critical theory influences, qualitative research aligns well with counseling psychology’s commitment to multiculturalism, social justice, and empowerment. Qualitative research can offer rich narratives of traditionally underserved populations and address complex issues related to multiculturalism and social justice. Importantly, qualitative research thus allows for breakthroughs in multicultural training and practice (Ponterotto, 2002). It can also be a tool to promote a social justice agenda by providing a voice to groups who have not been afforded equal power in society (Morrow, 2007).

However, even with many benefits to conducting qualitative research, students may have concerns about the feasibility of completing a qualitative dissertation. One problem may be the lack of solid training in qualitative methodologies. Poulin (2007) observed the lack of consistently available, formal training in qualitative methods, which may hinder opportunities to learn and apply qualitative approaches. In addition, even when qualitative courses are available to graduate students, rarely are they required (Ponterotto, 2005). With the many requirements students have to juggle, optional courses can sometimes be neglected or overlooked.

Another hurdle students may encounter includes concerns over the ability to complete a qualitative dissertation without delaying graduation. Indeed, qualitative research can be time intensive. Before embarking on a qualitative project, Wang (2008) identified several factors to consider, including fit between research questions and qualitative approach, knowledge of qualitative inquiry, support from advisors and faculty, familiarity with types...

(Continued on page 13)
of research designs, and readiness to design, propose, and conduct a rigorous, qualitative study.

Additional recommendations may help prepare students for some of these challenges.

First, students are encouraged to seek out qualitative courses if at all possible. Formal training in qualitative inquiry provides a foundation to understand the philosophical underpinnings, methodologies, and analyses that are inherent to the interpretative process of qualitative research. Alternatively, students may consider including committee members with experience, possibly even expertise, in qualitative research. Finding such support might mean looking outside of one’s department. Beyond this additional training and support, students may realize they have already been trained in particular elements of conducting qualitative research. For instance, active listening and interviewing skills, which are core competencies for counseling psychologists in training, are useful for conducting qualitative interviews or focus groups.

Second, given the array of paradigms and approaches in qualitative research, students are encouraged to learn the rationales for qualitative inquiry and how to apply various qualitative methodologies and approaches. Qualitative inquiry is more than asking open-ended questions and analyzing qualitative data (Wang, 2008); rigorous qualitative research incorporates theory and theoretical frameworks into the process of research (Anfara & Mertz, 2006). Moreover, students should seek “methodological congruence” between one’s research questions and methods of research (Morse & Richards, 2002 as cited by Creswell, 2007).

Finally, numerous authors in counseling psychology have identified qualitative research as a promising methodological development in research. Understanding advances and updates in qualitative research is predicated on a sophisticated understanding of the literature and the approaches to qualitative inquiry. Many qualitative methodologies are available to the counseling psychology doctoral student, including grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Charmaz, 2006), consensual qualitative research (Hill, Thomson, & Williams, 1997; Hill et al., 2005), and phenomenological research (Moustakas, 1994) among others. The citations in this brief article provide starting points to developing a more nuanced understanding of qualitative inquiry. For further reading, students are referred to the special issues of The Counseling Psychologist (2007, Vol. 35) and The Journal of Counseling Psychology (2005, Vol. 52).

References are available on the SAS website at http://www.div17.org/SAS/index.html

We want to hear from you!
Please contact us with articles, ideas, and announcements for the SAS Newsletter: sasnewslettereditor@gmail.com
members. Indeed, the biggest benefit to being a SAS member is arguably the fact that we are the voice of students within Division 17! This means that the SAS co-chairs actually sit on the Division 17 executive board, with the power to vote on important decisions that affect students’ lives. It is our goal to clearly communicate these more invisible, but powerful benefits to our members!

It is important to note that many of our members indicate clinical work as an important part of their career plans. To address this, we hope to integrate more clinically-related news in the future. Please stay tuned for a practitioner-focused interview in our upcoming newsletter!

To continue learning about the SAS membership, and voicing your ideas about how you would like SAS to assist in achieving your goals, we encourage you to Like us on Facebook at: https://www.facebook.com/APASCPGAS and take our ongoing polls.

SAS represents the unique perspective of student members; a perspective that is consistently requested by professionals on many different levels. As the acting voice of the student body, we encourage you to dream big about what you would like SAS to do for you!

Thank you,

Snehal Kumar & Erin Ring  
Membership Coordinators

Alexa Hanus & I-Ching Grace Hung  
Network Coordinators
**APA Presidential Initiatives:**

**From the Editor:** With this letter, Dr. Vasquez has given us a clear blueprint for how she views her place “at the table” as APA president. Her identity as a counseling psychologist informs her approach to the position, which is evident in this year’s presidential initiatives. Following is a brief overview of those initiatives. Readers are encouraged to visit [http://www.apa.org/about/governance/president/index.aspx](http://www.apa.org/about/governance/president/index.aspx) to read more about Dr. Vasquez and the initiatives. (The information below has been gathered from that source).

**The APA Presidential Task Force on Immigration.**
A number of psychologists have been asked to provide a report that is an evidence-based look at factors related to immigration. From the counseling psychology perspective, the task is to look at both mental health and behavioral health needs across the lifespan. This is a developmental perspective that accounts for psychosocial and cultural factors, as well as factors associated with prejudice. As many of us conjecture about how we can practice social justice in our field, the report will also include factors involved in immigration policy and how policy affects individuals, families, and society in general. A cursory look at current social issues in this country shows that immigration is heavily discussed. The president’s initiative is timely. While multicultural topics, including acculturation, have some history in counseling psychology, the initiative will hopefully serve to organize some of the literature for the entire APA community, provide guidance in prevention and treatment, give us a powerful social justice stand as an organization, and encourage future research in the area.

**The Presidential Task Force on Preventing Discrimination and Promoting Diversity.**
The Executive Board of SAS could not be more encouraged as we look at presidential initiatives regarding diversity in both Division 17 and the APA as a whole. After all, Social Justice and Diversity are main pillars of our organization. The task force is taking a broad and informed approach, looking at mechanisms of exclusion by perpetrators of prejudice (i.e. how does exclusion take place?), looking at ways to promote inclusion, as well as looking at marginalized individuals as resilient actors—presenting findings of resilience, stress-related growth, and coping mechanisms. This initiative indeed follows a movement in psychology that moves the issues of the marginalized “from the margin to the center” (Hooks, 2000, book title; Singh & Chun, 2010, article title). One of the encouraging goals of the Task Force is the dissemination of this report to a number of readers, including APA members, the public, various institutions and organizations, and policy makers.

**The Presidential Task Force on Educational Disparities.**
We have only to look at the outline of counseling psychology topics provided by Dr. Vasquez to see that the subject of educational disparity is central. This Task Force is charged with developing strategies from the literature with the aim of reducing disparity. Just as the other two initiatives have clear social justice roots, this initiative seeks to bridge the gap between science and practice by providing empirically-based strategies to bring about social change in prevention, promotion of normative development despite stigma and prejudice, promotion of well-being of those less privileged, guidance for practitioners in inclusive vocational counseling, and guidance for practitioners in remedial interventions. These are counseling psychology goals.

---

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the policies of the APA or the Society of Counseling Psychology.